

**OMB Package
2010 Focus Group Interviews
Multilingual Initiative Strategy Office (MLISO)**

Background

Executive Order 13166 (EO 13166), "Improving Access to Services for Persons with Limited English Proficiency" requires federal agencies to provide meaningful access to persons who have difficulty speaking and understanding English. In response to the Executive Order, the Multilingual Initiative was established to determine the need to expand and/or integrate products and services to assist limited English-speaking taxpayers in meeting their tax responsibilities. The MLISO is continuing the MLI efforts of developing strategies and policies that target the specific needs of LEP customers.

Historically, the Multilingual Initiative Strategy Office (MLISO), as a part of the IRS Needs Assessment Process conducts research of external stakeholders to solicit feedback on tax-related language assistance for limited-English proficient (LEP). This includes conducting Focus Groups at the IRS Nationwide Tax Forums held in six locations across the country annually. The feedback, along with that of other research efforts allows IRS to develop and improve IRS products and services for the LEP.

As done in prior years, the MLISO will conduct focus groups at three of the 2010 IRS Nationwide Tax Forums as follows:

Chicago	July 13-15, 2010
New York, NY	August 10-12, 2010
San Diego	August 31 – September 2, 2010

MLISO staff will conduct focus groups to assess the needs of tax practitioners and other external stakeholders whose clients who have limited English reading and/or speaking skills.

Purpose

This OMB request is to obtain approval for MLISO to conduct focus groups with tax forum participants at the 2010 IRS Nationwide Tax Forums. The tax forums present an opportunity to solicit feedback from tax professionals on IRS products and services critical to assisting the LEP taxpayers in understanding their rights and obligations. The purpose of this study is to seek comments and suggestions from tax professionals who are familiar and have used the Forms with their taxpayers. We would like to get their input on the translated forms to determine if additional changes are needed on the forms in order to meet the needs of the limited English proficient taxpayers.

A key component of EO 13166 requires internal and external assessment of the LEP population and their language assistance needs. The Executive Order requires regular

assessment to determine the “resources that will be needed to provide effective language assistance” and the effectiveness of those resources.

Methodology

Research Methodology – Focus Group Interviews

To meet the objectives of this project we will complete the following steps:

Step 1 – Trained analysts from the MLISO, with experience in dealing with multilingual issues, will screen the potential focus group participants to determine the following:

- Client base is mostly Spanish speaking
- Use of the Forms 2848 (SP) and W -7 (SP)

Step 2 – Focus group participants will be allowed time to complete Forms 2848 SP and W-7 (SP) with a scenario to determine if additional changes are needed on the forms.

Step 3 – MLISO and Tax Forms and Publications Research analysts will serve as focus group moderators, asking probing questions to stimulate discussion on the website.

Step 4 – MLISO will report preliminary findings.

Step 5 – MLISO will prepare a final report of findings and include it in the MLIS Customer Base Report..

Efforts Not to Duplicate Research

As an oversight office, MLISO has taken steps to ensure that these research efforts will not be a duplicate of existing studies. MLISO coordinates with IRS business units and Research staffs to keep abreast of research efforts pertaining to the LEP community.

Explanation of Decision to Provide any Payment or Gift to Participants

Each selected participant who participates in the focus group is entitled to receive a gift of nominal value. [The gift will be one or more giveaways approved by the IRS for distribution at the 2010 Nationwide Tax Forums].

Estimated Burden Hours

120 potential participants anticipated to be screened for the six focus groups.
(2 focus groups per forum)

(40 practitioners screened @ 3 tax forums = 120)

120 practitioners screened x .50 eligibility rate = 60 participants.

Estimated screening time: 1 minute

Estimated screening burden: 1 x 120 = 2 hours

Estimated time to complete Focus Group: 1 hour and a half (½ hrs.)

Estimated participant burden: 60 x 90 = 90 hours

Total burden (screening and survey participation) = 92 hours

Estimated Cost

MLISO estimates total /focus group costs as follows:

Travel - (staff to all three locations)-	\$13,500.00
Gift – (for participating in focus group)	\$ 1,000.00
Total estimated cost	\$14,500.00

Privacy, Security, Disclosure, and Anonymity

The MLI Strategy Office will ensure that the utmost scrutiny is given to privacy, security, and disclosure when reporting the results from the survey. No individual taxpayer data will be used for this project. The data derived from the survey will be used in the final report. During screening and survey administration only the first name of participants will be used. We will limit and control the amount of information that we collect to those items that are necessary to accomplish the research objectives.

We will protect the privacy of participants by not using names in our report. We will also control official access to the information and will not allow public access to the information.

We will apply fair information and record-keeping practices to ensure protection of all participants. The criterion for disclosure laid out in the Privacy Act, the Freedom of Information Act, and section 6103 of the Internal Revenue Code provides for the protection of information as well as its release to authorized recipients.

Special Tallies and Other Information

The following information will be provided within 60 days after the close of the Tax Forums.

1. Findings: a brief summary of significant (important) findings that were evidenced in the results.
2. Actions taken or lessons learned: a brief summary of actions taken or lessons learned as a result of the findings.
3. Number of participants screened.

4. Date the data collection began
5. Date the data collection ended.
6. Cost: reproduction costs travel, and any other costs incurred as direct result of the focus groups.
7. Burden hours.

Attachments

- Focus Group Screener and Moderator's Guide
- Demographic Survey (handout prior to focus group discussion)